Act. The experts were of the opinion that in view of the similarity in the pattern of use of PPA formulations in India with that in UK, the drug could be permitted to be marketed in cough and cold preparations with daily dose of not more than 50 mg. for children and 100 mg. for adults.

PPA in cough and cold remedies continues to be used in UK, Germany etc. However, a fresh review of the use of PPA in anti cold preparations in context of the recent technical literature available on the drug, has been initiated in consultation with members of National Pharmacovigilance Advisory Committee and other experts.

Price control measures on drugs

*67. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN:
DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the committee set up to examine price control (including trade margin) of drugs have submitted its report;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to restrict profit margin of pharmaceutical companies and also to safeguard the interest of consumers?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b) A Committee under the Chairmanship of Joint Secretary (PI) was constituted to examine the span of price control (including trade margin) in the light of National Common Minimum Programme and the observations of the Supreme Court in SLP NO, 3668/2003 and to suggest measures for fulfilling the objective of National Common Minimum Programme to ensure the availability of life saving drugs at reasonable prices. This Committee has submitted its interim report to the Government. The Committee has recommended, *inter-alia*, intensive monitoring on the prices of all those drugs out of the selected basket (National List of Essential Medicines, 2003) which are not under price control, ceilings on trade margins of drugs, a system of price negotiations

for the new patented drugs, special schemes for people below poverty line, introduction of Rajasthan Model of Life Line Fluid Stores (hospital pharmacy stores run by Medicare Societies) for bulk purchase of drugs directly from manufacturers and selling them at reduced prices, compounding of offences under the Essential Commodities Act, establishment of DPCO cells in all States on the model of Karnataka, efforts to increase public awareness, wide publicity to policies and decisions of the Government and NPPA etc.

(c) 74 bulk drugs specified in the First Schedule of Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO 1995) and the formulations based thereon are under price control. Prices of non-Scheduled formulations are fixed by the manufacturers themselves, however, the Government takes corrective measures when public interest is found to be adversely affected. A system of monitoring prices of these drugs is followed by NPPA and wherever the increase in prices is higher than the limits fixed by the NPPA, corrective action to reduce the same is taken. Moreover, recently the Government have imposed excise duty on the MRP of medicines giving abatement of 35% *vide* Notification No.2/2005-Central Excise (N.T.) dated the 7th January, 2005 which has been increased to 40% *vide* Notification No. 4/2005-Central Excise (N.T.) dated the 23rd February, 2005. This is likely to have an impact on the profit and trade margins for various drugs.

Agricultural growth target

†*68. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:
SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that only1.5 per cent growth has been achieved as against the target of 4 per cent in agriculture;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take for increasing agricultural production?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.